

**LOUISIANA AGRICULTURAL FINANCE AUTHORITY (Lafa)**  
**MINUTES**

**November 18, 2020**

3:30 PM

Google Meets – [meet.google.com/wwj-zjmv-ggp](https://meet.google.com/wwj-zjmv-ggp)

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF) Commissioner Mike Strain at 10:00 AM.

**II. ROLL CALL**

The roll was called by Melanie Tullier.

**Present:** Commissioner Mike Strain, Hugh Andre, Kent Brown, Devin Davis, Jennifer Hill, Ronald Petree, Representative Chris Turner, Bill Waguespack (joined at 10:04 AM)

Mrs. Tullier stated there was a quorum with eight members present.

**III. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

**IV. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN**

A motion was made by Mr. Petree to nominate Commissioner Mike Strain as chairman. Hearing no other nominations, he was elected by acclamation.

A motion was made by Mr. Brown to nominate Ronald Petree as vice-chairman. Hearing no other nominations, he was elected by acclamation.

**V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

Commissioner Strain asked the board members to review the minutes from the May 13, 2020 meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Petree to approve the minutes from the May 13, 2020 meeting. It was seconded by Mr. Brown, and passed unanimously.

**VI. REVIEW OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

Mrs. Catrina Irvin presented Lafa's Financial Statements to the board and answered the members' questions.

A motion was made by Mr. Andre to accept the Financial Statements. It was seconded by Mr. Davis, and passed unanimously.

## **VII. COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

- Commissioner Strain thanked Michelle Ribera and Melanie Tullier for setting up the LAFA meeting online.
- Commissioner Strain notified the board that LAFA received significant damage at the Lacassine Industrial Park. Lacassine was used as a staging area for Entergy and distribution site for local agricultural needs.
- Commissioner Strain asked the new members to introduce themselves:
  - Rep. Chris Turner from Union and Lincoln Parishes, and is a member of the House Agriculture Committee.
  - Rep. Jack McFarland is the chairman of the House Agriculture Committee.
  - Hugh Andre who farms about 8000 acres of sugarcane, rice, soybeans, and crawfish.
  - Jennifer Hill who currently works for Regions Bank and has 41 years in banking experience.
- LAFA's focus is to grow the rural economy and administer federal funding for agriculture and disaster recovery.
- Mr. Petree thanked Commissioner Strain for his assistance in helping farmers receive payments from the CFAP program, and for adding crawfish and rice as eligible crops.

## **VIII. OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. Indian Creek Update**

Commissioner Strain updated the board on the current status of the Indian Creek Campground.

### **B. Certified Louisiana Program Update**

Deana Erdey updated the board on the status of the Certified Louisiana Program.

## **IX. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Certified Louisiana Program Boards & Commissions' Grants**

A motion was made by Mr. Petree to accept the proposed budget of \$15,000 to each board and commission except for \$5,000 to LSU Super Plants Program. It was seconded by Mr. Andre and passed unanimously.

**B. Consideration of the FY 2021 Budget**

A motion was made by Mr. Petree to accept the proposed budget for LAFA. It was seconded by Mr. Brown and passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Mr. Waguespack to accept the proposed budget for Indian Creek. It was seconded by Mr. Davis and passed unanimously.

**C. Sexual Harassment Policy and Training for Board/Commission Members**

A motion was made by Mr. Brown to accept the resolution as presented to accept LDAF's Sexual Harassment Policy as LAFA's policy. It was seconded by Mr. Waguespack and passed unanimously.

**D. Lake Providence Canning and Packing House**

A motion was made by Mr. Petree giving Commissioner Strain permission to proceed with using \$50,000 to purchase the Lake Providence Canning and Packing House and to lease it back into commerce. It was seconded by Mr. Waguespack and passed unanimously.

**E. Agricultural Workforce Development Program**

A motion was made by Rep. Turner to budget \$50,000 to fund the Agricultural Workforce Development Program. It was seconded by Mr. Andre and passed unanimously.

**F. Delinquent payment owed to LAFA from the Louisiana Farm and Agribusiness Loan and Grant Program recipients**

A motion was made by Mr. Brown to allow LAFA staff to proceed with turning over for collection all past due accounts. It was seconded by Mr. Petree and passed unanimously.

**G. Lease payments due by Lacassine Industrial Park tenants impacted by Hurricanes Laura and Delta**

A motion was made by Mr. Andre to allow the Chairman to negotiate with the tenants of Lacassine Industrial Park on issues that could include deferral or forgiveness of rental payments and alternate housing for tenants who suffered major inconvenience or damages from Hurricane Laura and Delta. It was seconded by Rep. Turner and passed unanimously.

## **H. Purchase and lease of trucks for Weights & Measures**

A motion was made by Mr. Petree to allow LAFA to purchase four trucks at the cost of \$842,510.00 and lease them to Weights & Measures over 10 years. It was seconded by Mr. Davis and passed unanimously.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Waguespack made a motion to have a resolution drafted and mailed to thank Marcel Parker, Calvin Viator, and Jeanine Herrington for their service to the Louisiana Agricultural Finance Authority. It was seconded by Mr. Petree and passed unanimously.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Rep. Turner to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Mr. Andre, and passed unanimously at 11:27 AM.